

Luther Markwart's Tribute to Jack Roney

ASA's 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting held August 3, 2021

Opening Remarks:

Thank you Chairman Pettus. On behalf of the entire beet and cane industry, thank you for your two years of service as ASA Chairman.

There is a great deal of additional work and responsibility that comes with the Chairmanship of ASA. Having served as chairman seven times, I can assure you, it is no easy task.

Earlier today Jack reviewed a long list of ASA activities and challenges that we faced and succeeded this past year.

One of the most important tasks was to search and hire a replacement for our sugar statesman Jack Roney. We are thrilled to have Dr. Rob Johansson on board.

So, thank you Chairman Pettus, for your leadership on all of these fronts and, to the exceptional ASA staff who support all of us.

We have succeeded in the past because we are an industry that thinks creatively, works collaboratively, leads proactively and executes our work effectively. We have achieved this with your leadership, and will continue to do so as we ramp up for the 2023 farm bill. Now to turn to our final tribute.

Tribute to Jack Roney:

At the end of the month Jack Roney, ASA's director of economics and policy analysis, will begin his long awaited and well-deserved retirement.

The passing of this torch from an industry icon is difficult for all of us.

I have worked with Jack for over 30 years and we could have easily spent this entire time today paying tribute to him for all of the contributions he has made for our industry. But here are a few observations.

Jack has always been persistent and a hard worker.

He struggled as a child to overcome polio but it gave him grit, persistence and determination to overcome obstacles and do great things.

He became an athlete. He was on the swim and water polo teams in college.

He's smart. He holds a bachelor's and two masters degrees, attending Fordham University in New York City; University of Cologne in Germany; American University; and Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, DC.

Jack enjoyed a 15-year tenure at USDA. During this time, USDA's leadership quickly recognized that Jack had a very unique talent ... he was an economist that could write in laymen's terms. And so they kept promoting him.

He first started with USDA in 1974 writing for USDA's Economic Research Service's Farm Index magazine. He also wrote for USDA's Foreign Agriculture magazine and supported many speeches for the Secretary of Agriculture. At the age of just 26, he was selected as the first Director of Information for a brand new agency, USDA's World Outlook Board.

While Jack's background in journalism and public affairs is what initially brought him to USDA, he was selected for a USDA program that sponsored him to return to graduate school, where he earned a Master of international public policy.

And this is what set Jack on the economist path within USDA, first analyzing livestock, then grains, and then sugar.

In 1985, he became USDA's World Agriculture Outlook Board's first Sugar and Specialty Crops Analyst and chair of the newly created Interagency Sugar Estimates Committee.

That committee is responsible for developing all (World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates) WASDE sugar forecasts. That means he has helped either create or analyze over 430 WASDE's.

Those WASDE's often determine how our program is managed that directly impacts you. So, he's had his finger on the pulse of the sugar industry since the creation of WASDEs, and that in-depth knowledge has certainly benefited our industry.

The Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association pulled Jack from USDA where he served from 1989-1996. When the viability of sugar production in Hawaii sadly diminished, a place was ready-made for Jack at ASA to use his gifts and talents for the whole industry.

He has been our technical and policy analyst, and worked with those who study our industry and markets in both the public and private sectors.

He has been an ambassador to legislators and administrators; educator to the media; and engages with domestic buyers and sellers, as well as our foreign suppliers.

Jack is a truly gifted individual whose economic and Journalistic skills, combined with his Irish sense of humor, has endeared him to us over these last three decades.

He takes complicated issues and makes them easy for people to understand and a joy to listen to. That is a very difficult task and Jack did it exquisitely.

When one voice is needed to testify, or introduce our industry and policy (sugar 101) to new Hill staffers, Jack has done it extraordinarily well.

His enthusiasm and passion for who you are, and what you do has shown through to those who need to hear your story and make policy administrative decisions that directly affect you.

He has spent most of his professional life serving your needs. Your mission has been his mission, and that mission has been personal to Jack.

In literally the millions of contacts and conversations he has had over his career, he has served with honor, distinction and integrity.

He has been our first responder, available 24/7 to tackle the unforeseen crises that arise from time-to-time. We apologize to Debbie, Kyle and Allison for pulling his time and attention away

from you. We also beg your forgiveness Jack for scheduling an ASA meeting the day before, on or after St. Patrick's day.

When as an industry we collectively need to say something important on any issue, Jack would have something drafted within minutes.

His analysis of market forces helped the industry make key strategic decisions.

Jack has done all of this so that our nation could be well fed, our world class farmers, and the generations that will take over their land, will prosper.

His many skills provided prestigious platforms for leadership.

Past Chairman of the Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee for Trade in Sweeteners and Sweetener Products,

Past president of the prestigious Sugar Club, that meets in New York City.

He has worked on nine Farm Bills.

Oh, we can't forget that as a Washington Capitol's hockey season ticket holder for 46 years, we have endured his excitement and anguish based on their standings. Their winning of the Stanley Cup finally gave us all joy and relief!

We have been there with, and for, each other through life's trials and tribulations and comforted by your kind words and thoughtfulness. And yes, we have celebrated many victories along the way. So, we close this tribute with the famous Irish blessing.

*May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the sunshine warm upon your face
The rains fall soft upon your fields ---and until we meet again
May God hold you in the palm of his hand*

On behalf of the entire beet and cane industry, and all of the communities supported by our industry, please know that you are forever loved, admired and appreciated, and that you will forever be woven into the very fabric of this industry.

Now, we have one more surprise for you. We've been working on a secret project to help send you off in grand style and convey just how special you are to all of us.

We've been collecting video messages from around the industry to give people the opportunity wish you well. We received such an overwhelming response, that it would take hours to play all of those special messages.

So, we've compiled a small number of clips which we'd like to now play for you. We'll also be providing you with the entire video library that you can watch at a later time.

So, without further ado, here's just a sampling of the videos messages from your friends and colleagues. I think everyone will all agree, it is worthy of an Emmy, an Oscar and a Tony award. Enjoy!

[**Roney Retirement Video Compilation**](#)

Closing Remarks:

Thank you. That video was fantastic and perfectly expressed the incredible mark you've left on the industry. Thank you to everyone who participated.

Ok, the last order of business is to provide you with information about our long-awaited 2022 Symposium which will be held at the Westin Hotel in Seattle, Washington, over the dates of July 29 – August 3, 2022. We can't wait to gather in full force in-person. It will be so great to get together again. So please mark your calendars!

With that, we thank you for joining us today and our Annual meeting now stands adjourned. Stay safe and see you next year.



Thank you for joining us!

If you have any questions, please email us at info@sugaralliance.org. We will send you the final presentations via email in the next 24 hours.



Mark Your Calendar!
37th International Sweetener Symposium
July 29 – August 3, 2022
Westin Seattle * Seattle, WA

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